

Remarks

Claims 1-6, 13-19, and 21-30 are pending in this application. Claims 7-12 and 20 were previously canceled. In view of following comments, allowance of all the claims pending in the application is respectfully requested.

Requirement for Information

In response to the Requirement for Information on page 2 of the Office Action mailed September 15, 2003, Applicants respectfully submit that the requested information, the PC-NAS software program, cannot be readily obtained.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 13-18, and 21-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oshika et al. ("Improved Retrieval of Foreign Names From Large Database", 1998, IEEE, pages 480-487) in view of Hermansen ("Automatic Name Searching in Large Data Bases of International Names," 1985, also described in lines 6-10 on page 5 of the specification). Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hermansen ("Automatic Name Searching in Large Data Bases of International Names," 1985, also described in lines 6-10 on page 5 of the specification). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections as these references, alone or in combination with one another, do not disclose, teach or suggest each and every feature of the claimed invention.

Specifically, Oshika does not disclose a method comprising at least the features of obtaining text data representing a first proper name and a second proper name,

converting the text data to **one or more representations of said first proper name in a phonetic alphabet**, and **comparing the representation of said first proper name to at least one predetermined representation of said second proper name in said phonetic alphabet**. Oshika appears to describe a method for classifying a proper name based on Hidden Markov Models. At best, Oshika receives a proper name and runs it against a Markov Model. Names in this database are not converted to a plurality of **phonetic alphabet representations**. Since Oshika does not disclose converting text representing a first proper name and a second proper name to phonetic alphabet representations and comparing a first proper name representation and a second proper name representation, independent claims 1, 13, 21, 23, and 30 are patentable over Oshika for at least these reasons.

Furthermore, the Oshika reference presents multiple, distinct methods of performing various aspects of name retrieval from a database, but provides no method of combining these techniques. Oshika presents one name search technique wherein a search request is reduced to a canonical form and the search request is then matched against a database of names reduced to their canonical forms (Oshika, page 480, section 2.0). Oshika also presents a second name search technique wherein names are classified as to language source using Hidden Markov Models (page 481, section 3.0). Neither of these methods disclose using phonetic alphabet representations. In the Office Action mailed September 15, 2003, Examiner appears to be using portions of these distinct methods to reject the claims (See Office Action, page 4). However, the

reference itself does not combine these methods, nor does the reference provide a suggestion or motivation to combine these methods.

Hermansen does not make up for the deficiencies of Oshika. Thus, the combination of Oshika and Hermansen does not teach and suggest the features of claims 1, 13, 21, 23, and 30. Claims 2-6, 14-18, 22, and 24-29 depend from and add additional features to one of independent claims 1, 13, 21, 23, and 30. For at least the reasons provided herein with respect to claims 1, 13, 21, 23, and 30, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-6, 14-18, 22, and 24-29 are patentable over Oshika and Hermansen.

Regarding claim 19, Hermansen does not teach or suggest each and every feature of claim 19. Hermansen discloses using an n-gram algorithm to perform the matching aspects of claim 19 rather than an algorithm based on phonetic alphabetic representations. For at least this reason, claim 19 is patentable over Hermansen.

Conclusion

A full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

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Respectfully submitted,

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